

THE RICHMOND DISPATCH-THURSDAY, MAY 27, 1897.

A BREEZY MEETING.

CITIZENS OF BARTON HEIGHTS DIVIDED ON THE BOND ISSUE.

CHARGES AGAINST THE COUNCILMEN.

A Protracted and Lively Debate Ends in Disorder—Some Talk of Resigning Charter—Much Opposition to Proposed New Water-Works

Barton Heights, the gentle and salubrious suburb on the northern hill, was visited by a veritable maelstrom of political sensation last night.

For some months there has been evident upon the municipal horizon a little cloud in the shape of a proposed bond issue to meet the expenses of erecting a water plant to supply the town, and to provide for other public improvements. The nebulous omen has grown more and more threatening, and last night the storm burst over the infant city in all its intensity, and only time, the healer of divisions and leveler of factions, contains the key to the present situation, which will be greatly influenced, however, by the result of the election to-day.

The split on the question of issuing bonds appears to be as hopeless as it is well defined, and the temper of the meeting called last night to discuss the issue was far from being equable.

The call for the meeting was contained in a circular issued by some citizens, which sets forth that "as much as it has become known that dissatisfaction is rife with the administration of the affairs of the town under its incorporation, in that the amount of taxation is out of proportion to the benefits resulting therefrom, and that certain residents have complained that it is to their detriment that the town should incorporate, the charter and return to the former condition of affairs under the administration of the county government, whilst others of the residents believe that the surrender of the charter would be highly damaging to the town and subject its citizens to great evils and inconveniences," a committee of five was appointed to investigate the condition of the town prior to and since its incorporation. The result of this investigation is, according to the figures presented, entirely satisfactory.

COURT AT THE MEETING.

The meeting was called to take place at 8 o'clock in the school-house, but it was almost an hour later when it was rapped to order. By this time the large school-room was uncomfortably crowded.

The interim was taken up with personal discussions, and it was evident from the frequent outbursts of feeling that those to whom the circular addressed were dissatisfied were in a very decided majority.

This fact was emphatically brought out when Mr. Josiah Lorraine, having called the meeting to order, nominated Mr. H. Lee Loraine as chairman. The nomination was seconded and put without further delay, but the opposition was vociferous. Mr. Ryland thereupon asked for further nominations, and Captain J. H. O'Bannon was nominated and voted supported. Mr. Loraine asked permission to withdraw. There was some pretty tugging over the situation, but a compromise was reached by the withdrawal of Captain O'Bannon in favor of Mr. Loraine, whose name was then put to the same storm of protest. After some delay, Mr. Loraine was prevailed upon to take the chair.

The next question was the mode of procedure. Mr. Loraine called upon Mr. T. K. Sands to address the meeting, Mr. Sands is opposed to the bond issue, and is one of the candidates for councilmanic honors running on the opposition ticket. Mr. Sands declined to speak, saying that he understood that those who favored the bond issue had called the meeting to clear up all the difficulties that confronted those opposed to it.

Mr. Beach suggested that all the candidates should address the meeting. Mr. Ryland said that it would probably be best if one of the candidates in favor of the bonds should speak and be followed by one opposed to them, and his idea was adopted.

Mr. Ryland then asked permission to make a statement in the interest of harmony. "We are neighbors and friends," he said, "this is a question of policy only, and there is no reason to get excited and hurt each other feelings. I implore you all to act gentlemen. We shall make enemies of each other and do harm to our town if we get into a heated discussion."

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Mayor Jones was the first speaker. He was in favor of the bond issue, he said, as soon as proper plans could be realized. He spoke at length on the contemplated improvements. The water-supply would minimize the danger of fire, which was a great convenience.

He concluded: "Captain Lee's statement, which many made, that the same storm of protest would follow the proposal. After some delay, Mr. Loraine was prevailed upon to take the chair.

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